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Archaeological Excavation
& Watching Brief

December 2007



Kirkdale Archaeology
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<u>Site</u>	Fort George
<u>N.G.R</u>	NH 762 567
<u>Project Description</u>	Archaeological excavation and monitoring

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1. Introduction

Fort George was constructed in the aftermath of the 1745 Rising; completed in 1769 it remains largely unaltered today. It comprises a ravelin, at the E approach with the principal ditch and bridge behind (W of) it. The main rampart measures over 1km in circumference and includes six bastions, two of which (the NE and SE) flank the Principle (E) gate.

Immediately inside the Principal gate there is a large parade ground at the W limit of which stand the Artillery block and Staff blocks to the S and N respectively. The two "U" shaped barrack blocks are in the middle of the Fort and enclose the Barrack Square. The W part of the Fort houses stores and, at the far W end, the Chapel.

Trench 1 of the current excavation was to the rear (W) of the NW corner of the artillery block within a walled courtyard, measuring 13.50m N-S by 8.40m wide, where a cabin is to be erected. The trench was excavated to a depth great enough to allow the excavation of an area under the N wall to feed service ducts through.

N of the courtyard the trench was to continue to the N (Trench 2) to a service box and continue a short way N (Trench 3) finally turning E (Trench 4) to an existing service box.

Prior to and during the return visit on the 10th of December Trenches 2 and 3 were excavated but only the tarmac had been removed from the Eastern 6.15m of the long E-W stretch at the S end of the excavation (Trench 4).

There were finds recovered both by the contractors and the archaeologist, these were photographed and listed but only the pottery sherds were retained.

The work took place on the 4th, 5th & 10th of December 2007.

2. Excavations

Trench 1

This trench measured 1.50m square and was located against the N wall 600mm E of the NW corner of the courtyard.

The upper 120mm removed from the trench, **F001**, comprised the concrete surface of the courtyard. Immediately below **F001**, **F004** was a 180mm thick deposit of small (20mm by 15mm on average) angular gravel.

Under **F004**, **F011** was a mix of fairly large 150mm by 100mm on average) rectangular and sub rectangular blocks some of which were still bonded with hard pale grey mortar. **F011** measured up to 500mm in depth but was not present in the N part or the W 500mm of the trench, against the courtyard walls.

Roughly parallel to the S baulk and extending up to 300mm N from it, **F007** was a linear cut seen E-W through the trench. **F007** had a fairly steeply sloping N edge and the small area of the base that could be seen was flat. **F008**, the fill of **F007**, was light-mid grey sandy silt that had many winkle shells within it.

The wall of the N edge of the courtyard, **F002**, was formed with rectangular red sandstone blocks that were roughly coursed and pointed with hard pale grey mortar. **F002** extended 2.60m above the current ground level and 300mm below it. At the base of **F002** the foundations, **F003**, extended 260mm S from the face of the wall. The sandstone blocks in **F003** were roughly coursed and had the same pointing as that seen in **F002**. There were four courses of **F003** measuring a total of 750mm in height.

Between 250mm and 400mm S of **F003**, **F005** was a linear cut running E-W through the trench. The S edge of **F005** was fairly uneven and quite steep and the base was flat, the cut measured up to 400mm in width (N-S) at the top and 300mm at the base and was 800mm deep. The fill of **F005**, **F006**, was a fairly loose mid-dark brown sand and gravel comprising around 60% small (30mm by 20mm on average) rounded stones with occasional larger ones, 100mm by 80mm on average.

Cut by **F007** to the S, **F012** was a deposit of fairly loose mid-dark brown sand and gravel comprising roughly 50% small (30mm by 20mm on average) rounded stones and occasional larger ones, 80mm by 60mm on average. **F012** was a very similar deposit to **F006** and the top of the foundation trench was difficult to see N of this deposit.

Sealed by **F012**, **F009** was a, 220mm thick, deposit of mid grey silty sand with many charcoal flecks. Below **F009**, **F010** was a fairly even mix of orange brown sand and rounded pebbles. Up to 500mm of depth of **F010** was removed from under **F003** but it was not bottomed.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was located outside the courtyard, against and to the N of the N face of the N wall. The trench measured 1.25m N-S, 1.00m wide and up to 1.20m deep.

The current ground surface was formed with **F026**, a 100mm thick tarmac deposit. Fairly compact small (20mm by 15mm) angular gravel and **F026** sealed grey silt deposit **F013**. **F013** was seen throughout this trench and gravel made up roughly 80% of the, 200mm thick, deposit.

Below the **Phase 6** deposit **F013**, **F014** is 120mm thick and comprises loose grey silt with 10%-15% small (30mm by 20mm on average) rounded stones and occasional charcoal flecks. **F014** sealed **F015**, a deposit of loose orange brown sand measuring 80mm in thickness.

The wall face above ground level at the S end of the trench, **F022**, is constructed with rectangular red sandstone blocks that are coursed. Below **F022** and stepping out 50mm from it, **F023** comprises roughly coursed sandstone blocks with occasional smaller stone pinnings and measures 550mm in height. The base of the wall, **F024** is formed mainly with roughly coursed large sub-rectangular blocks that have many smaller stone pinnings between them. **F024** is up to 500mm high and the bottom of the feature is an uneven line.

The foundation at this (the S) side of the wall, **F020**, is only seen alongside **F024** where it measures 200mm in width at the top and narrows to 50mm at the base. The fill of **F020**, **F019**, is mid brown sandy silt with roughly 20% angular stone fragments measuring 40mm by 20mm on average.

Cut by **F020**, **F016** comprised compact mid-dark grey sandy silt and small rounded stones, approximately 40% stones measuring 30mm by 20mm on average. **F016** was seen throughout the trench and measured up to 60mm in thickness.

Sealed by **F016** and seen in all but the N 200mm of the trench, **F017** was a mix of mid brown sand and rounded gravel, 30% stones measuring 60mm by 40mm on average. **F017** measured 180mm in thickness where it was cut by **F020** but tailed to nothing at the N edge of the trench. Below **F017**, **F018** comprised orange brown sand and stones in a fairly even mix; the rounded stones measured 80mm by 60mm on average.

Trench 3

This trench continued N from Trench 2, it measured 2.85m N-S, 650mm wide and up to 400mm deep.

The upper deposits **F026** and **F013** were as described in Trench 2. E-W across the S end of the trench there under **F013** there is a concrete box, **F021**. **F021** measured 700mm N-S and was over 600mm high, the base and E and W limits of the box were not seen.

Trench 4

Trench 4 ran E from the N end of Trench 3, it measured 13.30m E-W, 650mm wide and up to 400mm deep. The E 6.15m was excavated without archaeological recording or supervision. This trench was entirely within a previous service trench.

F026 and **F013** were removed from this trench and below them there was a deposit of orange brown sand and gravel, **F025**. **F025** bottomed onto red ceramic pipes that were not fully uncovered in the excavation. The services to be put in were to go over the existing ceramic pipes.

3. Phasing

Phase 1

Within the yard **F010** is the undisturbed subsoil.

In Trench 2 **F017** was subsoil and although it is possibly redeposited there was nothing noted within it to suggest this (finds, mortar etc.). Below **F017**, **F018** is in-situ subsoil.

Phase 2

Directly over **F010**, **F009** may be the remains of the ground surface in situ prior to the Fort being constructed.

Cut by the **Phase 3** foundation trench **F020**, it was thought that **F016** was the original ground surface in the area to the N of the yard.

Phase 3

The wall forming the N edge of the courtyard, **F002**, is similar in construction to the Artillery block and could easily be part of the same construction phase. The foundations of **F002**, **F003**, are 300mm below the current ground level, perhaps suggesting that the ground level has been raised.

F005 is the foundation trench for **F003** and it is filled with **F006**. There were two hand-made brick fragments and two potsherds recovered from the fill of **F006**.

Cut by **F007** (**Phase 4**) and possibly **F005** to the N, **F012** is a deposit of sand and gravel that may have been imported as leveling immediately prior to or deposited during the construction of the Artillery House.

F022, is the N face of the wall seen at **F002** below it **F023** is a stepped base to the wall. Under **F023**, **F024** is the foundations.

The top of foundation trench **F020** was at the top of **F024** suggesting the top of the foundations were at the ground level outside the yard when the wall was constructed, they are now 500mm below the tarmac surface.

Phase 4

At the S end of Trench 1, **F007** is the N side of a linear cut that measured 500mm in depth within the trench. The most likely interpretation of **F007** was that it was a service trench, although there were no services seen within it this may have been because it/they were further S, outside the excavated area. Within **F008**, the fill of **F007**, there were many whole and fragmented winkle shells. A possibility is that the

shells were left over construction material, brought into the Fort to be crushed into the mortar pointing. There were also a brick fragment, twenty animal bones and five white earthenware sherds recovered from this deposit.

Deposit **F014** was probably a make-up layer, perhaps for an earlier surface. There were nine animal bone fragments, a complete brick, a tile fragment and thirteen oyster shells recovered from this deposit. The finds seen may suggest that this deposit included domestic waste, although the numbers of finds were not great there was only a small area of this deposit removed and the method was pick and shovel.

Below **F014**, **F015** may have been construction waste.

Phase 5

Sealed by the **Phase 6** deposits **F011** was included blocks of masonry that were still jointed and was probably demolition debris, perhaps used as make up for the late surface. This seems to suggest that there were once buildings standing in the yard and this phase sees them being demolished.

Phase 6

The upper current concrete surface, **F001**, and the bottoming for it, **F004**, are probably 20th century in date. This construction is above the scarcement at the base of the yards N wall and may show the ground level being raised, by around 300mm during this phase. It is however also possible that the material used for the construction of the earlier surface was removed and replaced with **F001** and **F004**.

The current ground surface outside the yard, **F026**, is tarmac and below it angular gravel **F013** was make up for it. These features were seen in Trenches 2, 3 and 4.

At the S end of Trench 3, concrete box **F021** is a British Telecom service box; it is unlikely to date to before 1960.

Under **F026** and **F013** in Trench 4, **F025** was the sand and gravel infill of a service trench, the scar of which can be seen running E-W through much of the Fort. This is part of the cable laying exercise that included the construction of **F021**.

4. Summary

The **Phase 1** deposits were dug into directly under and on either side of the yard's N wall. These were natural soils and had no archaeological significance.

Phase 2 is represented by the ground surface immediately prior to the Fort being constructed. There has probably been some contamination of this deposit during the building. Wherever this deposit is revealed it may be worth cleaning it and looking for any early features cut into it.

The construction of the yard is in **Phase 3**, within the excavated areas this includes the N wall and foundation trenches each are recorded at both the N and S sides. It looked like during this phase the ground level may have been lower than it currently is by 300mm in the yard and 500mm at the trenches to the N. Closer inspection of doorways etc. may help with interpretation of levels but there was not time for more general recording during this work. The layout within the yard and access to it has changed since this phase. Later features suggest there has been demolition of structures and there appear to be blocked features within the other walls, including a door aperture in the S wall. It is thought most likely that the yard is constructed at the same time or soon after the 1766 artillery block that it is attached to. The potsherds recovered from **F007** could date to this period.

Phase 4 is represented in Trench 1 a possible service trench with left over building material in its fill. This may have been part of the construction of the structures that are demolished in **Phase 5**, temporary buildings behind (W of) the Artillery House. The finds recovered from the fill of the trench included five sherds thought most likely to date to the second half of the 19th century. To the N of the yard deposit **F014** had domestic waste within it and below it **F015** included construction material. These deposits seemed to be raising the ground level for the creation of a surface but also suggest that there was other construction taking place. These deposits raise the ground level 250mm above the original but this is still the same distance under the current one. This phase looks to see some rebuilding within the fort and a possibility for the dating of it is 1881, when the Fort became the home depot for the Seaforth Highlanders.

Phase 5 sees the demolition of whatever structures stood in the yard. There is no firm dating for this phase but the feeling during excavation was that it fairly late and possibly even a similar date to **Phase 6**.

Phase 6 includes the current concrete and tarmac surfaces, within the yard and outside it respectively. Also seen in the area N of the yard are a telecom service box and a large service trench. The area that had not yet been excavated during the archaeological supervision was within the service trench and only to go down as far as the top of the pipes. The **Phase 6** features seem likely to post date the Fort becoming an ancient monument in 1964 and in places have been disturbed fairly recently.

A1. Appendix 1: Context List

No	Trench	Description	Date
F001	1	Concrete surface.	05/12/07
F002	1	South face of wall at the N end of the courtyard.	05/12/07
F003	1	Scarcement at the base of F002.	05/12/07
F004	1	Sub angular gravel deposit.	05/12/07
F005	1	Foundation trench for F002.	05/12/07
F006	1	Fill of F005.	05/12/07
F007	1	E edge of a feature along the W side of the trench.	05/12/07
F008	1	Fill of F007.	05/12/07
F009	1	Deposit of mid grey sandy silt.	05/12/07
F010	1	Orange brown sand and rounded pebbles.	05/12/07
F011	1	Area of stonework, often still bonded.	05/12/07
F012	1	Deposit of fairly loose mid-dark brown sand and gravel.	05/12/07
F013	2, 3 + 4	Fairly compact deposit of small angular gravel.	10/12/07
F014	2	Loose grey silt.	10/12/07
F015	2	Loose orange brown sand.	10/12/07
F016	2	Compact mid-dark grey sandy silt and small stones.	10/12/07
F017	2	Mid brown sand and rounded gravel.	10/12/07
F018	2	Orange brown sand and rounded stones.	10/12/07
F019	2	Mid brown sandy silt with angular stone fragments.	10/12/07
F020	2	Foundation trench for F023/F024.	10/12/07
F021	3	Concrete service inspection box.	10/12/07
F022	2	N South face of wall at the N end of the courtyard.	10/12/07
F023	2	Wall stepped out 50mm from F022.	10/12/07
F024	2	Walling stepped out 160mm from F022, scarcement.	10/12/07
F025	4	Sand and gravel infill.	10/12/07
F026	2, 3 + 4	Tarmac surface.	10/12/07

A2. Appendix 2: List of Finds

No	Context	Type	No of pieces	Description
1	F008	Shell	-----	Numerous winkle shells, a mix of whole and broken.
2	F008	Brick	1	Handmade brick fragment measures 70mm by 70mm and 60mm thick, only the thickness is complete.
3	F008	Bone	8	Rib fragments, probably sheep.
4	F008	Bone	3	Rib fragments, probably cattle.
5	F008	Bone	1	Cattle tooth.
6	F008	Bone	6	Cattle long bone fragments.
7	F008	Bone	2	Small unidentified fragments.
8	F008	Pottery	3	Base turning to side sherds of a large white earthenware plate. Clean white fabric and no decoration. Mid 19 th –early 20 th century.
9	F008	Pottery	1	Side and flange of same plate as seen at find 8, co-joins one of these sherds. Incised geometric decoration on the flange.
10	F008	Pottery	1	Edge fragment of a plate. Cream coloured fabric and blue floral decoration transferred or hand painted onto a light blue glaze. Probably 19 th century.
11	F006	Brick	2	Two part bricks, the incomplete lengths are 110mm and 60mm the full width (110mm) and thickness is seen on both fragments.
12	F006	Pottery	2	Two fragments of the same flat, bowl or plate, base. Cream coloured fabric and blue floral decoration transferred or hand painted onto a white glaze. 18 th /19 th century.
13	F014	Brick	1	A complete hand made brick, measures 215mm by 110mm and 55mm thick.
14	F014	Slate	1	Roof slate fragment measuring 110mm by 110mm and 10mm thick.
15	F014	Shell	13	Oyster shell fragments.
16	F014	Bone	2	Fragments of small ribs, perhaps rabbit.
17	F014	Bone	2	Cattle rib fragments.
18	F014	Bone	4	End parts of cattle long bones.
19	F014	Bone	1	Small fragment, unidentified.

A3. Appendix 3: List of Photographs

Frame	Trench	From	Description	Date
1	1	SE	Opening Trench 1.	04/12/07
2	1	E	Opening Trench 1.	04/12/07
3	1	E	Cuts F005 and F007 pre excavation.	05/12/07
4	1	E	Cuts F005 and F007 pre excavation.	05/12/07
5	1	N	Cuts F005 and F007 pre excavation.	05/12/07
6	1	S	Cuts F005 and F007 pre excavation.	05/12/07
7	1	W	Cuts F005 and F007 pre excavation.	05/12/07
8	1	E	Cut F005 excavated.	05/12/07
9	1	W	Cut F005 excavated.	05/12/07
10	1	E	Cut F005 excavated.	05/12/07
11	1	E	Demolition debris F011.	05/12/07
12	1	N	Shells in fill F008.	05/12/07
13	1	E	Demolition debris F011 in the W section..	05/12/07
14	1	N	S wall of the yard showing blocked door.	05/12/07
15	1	S	Wall F002 and foundations F003.	10/12/07
16	1	S	Wall F002 and foundations F003.	10/12/07
17	1	W	E section of the trench, post excavation.	10/12/07
18	1	E	W section of the trench, post excavation.	10/12/07
19	2	W	E section of the trench, post excavation.	10/12/07
20	2	E	W section of the trench, post excavation.	10/12/07
21	2	W	Location of Trenches 2 and 3.	10/12/07
22	2	N	Location of Trenches 2 and 3.	10/12/07
23	---	---	Ceramic finds.	10/12/07
24	---	---	Finds from F008.	10/12/07
25	---	---	Finds from F008.	10/12/07
26	---	---	Trench 2 finds.	10/12/07
27	---	---	All finds.	10/12/07
28	2	N	Line of the service trench seen in the tarmac.	10/12/07
29	---	S	Brick roof seen in the officer's guardroom.	10/12/07
30	---	S	Brick roof seen in the officer's guardroom.	10/12/07
31	---	W	Brick built walling at the Prince Of Wales bastion.	10/12/07
32	---	W	Brick built walling at the Prince Of Wales bastion.	10/12/07

A4. Appendix 4: Drawing List

No	Type	Scale	Trench	Description	Contexts	Date
1	Elevation	1:20	1	N elevation, S face of yard's N wall.	F001, F003 and F010.	05/12/07
2	Elevation	1:20	1	W elevation.	F001, F004-F010 and F012.	05/12/07
3	Elevation	1:20	1	S elevation.	F004, F008 and F011.	05/12/07
4	Plan	1:20	1	Post excavation plan of the trench.	F001-003 and F009.	05/12/07
5	Elevation	1:20	2	S Elevation, N face of yard's N wall.	F018 and F022-F024.	10/12/07
6	Elevation	1:20	2	W elevation.	F012-F021	10/12/07
7	Plan	1:50	1	Trench location plan.	-----	10/12/07
8	Plan	1:20	2+3	Trench location plan.	-----	10/12/07
9	Plan		2-4	Trench location plan.	-----	10/12/07

A5. Appendix 5: Figures and drawings

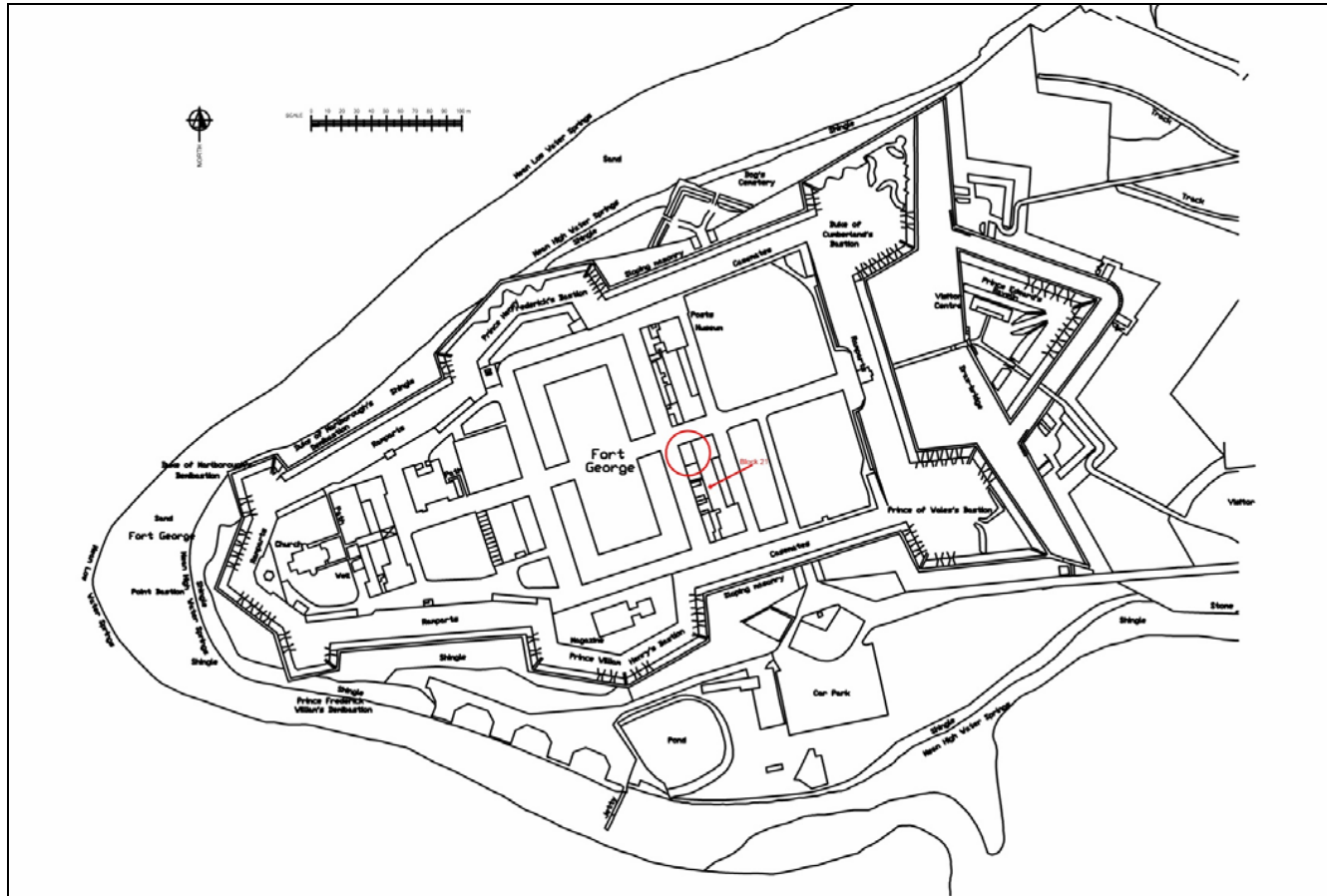


Figure 1 - Location of works

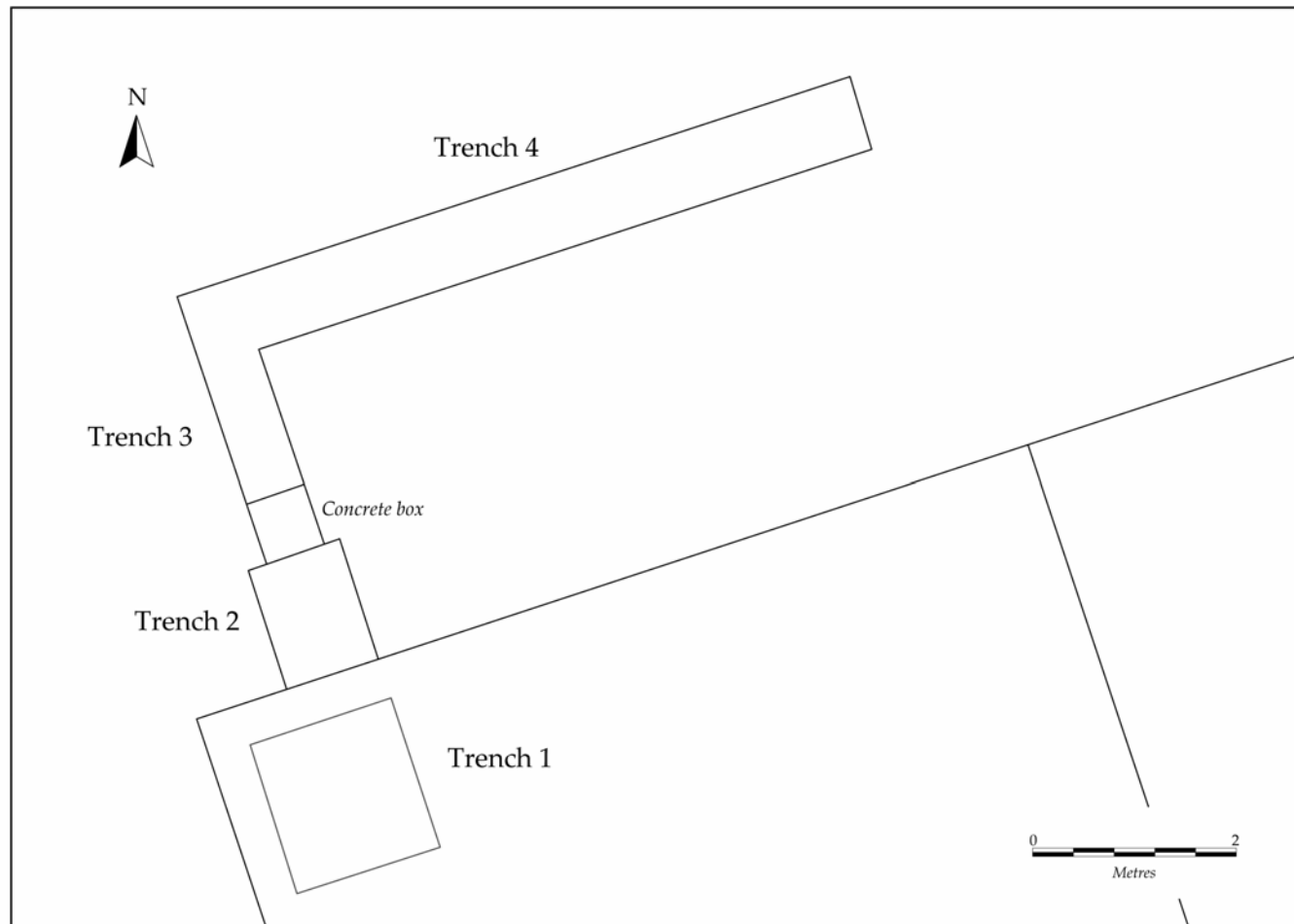


Figure 2 - Location of trenches

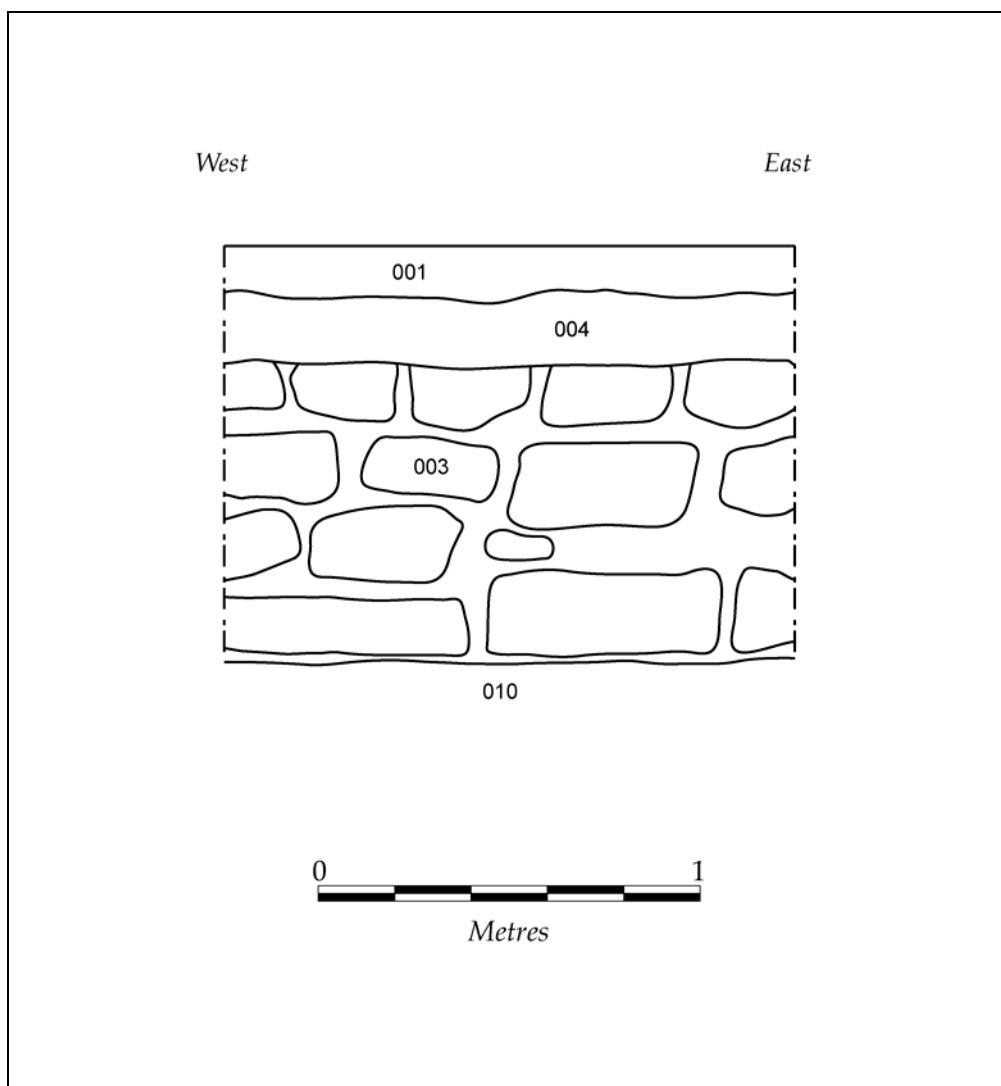


Figure 3 - Drawing 1

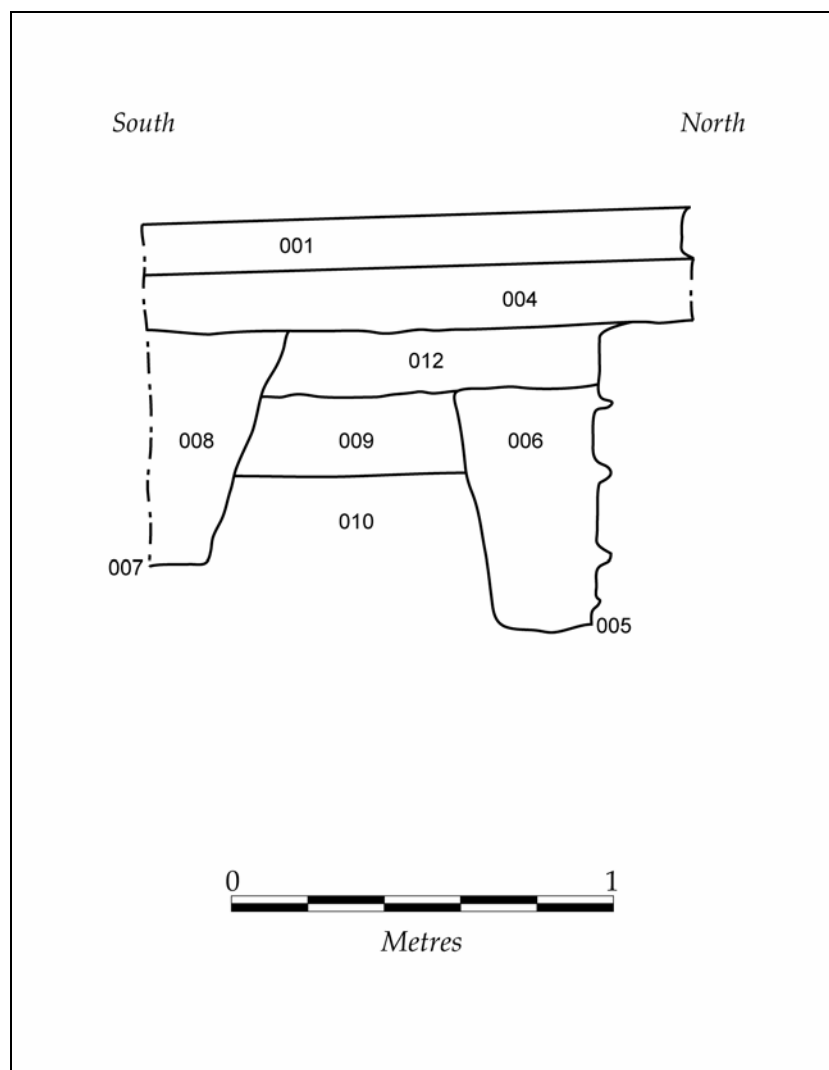


Figure 4 - Drawing 2

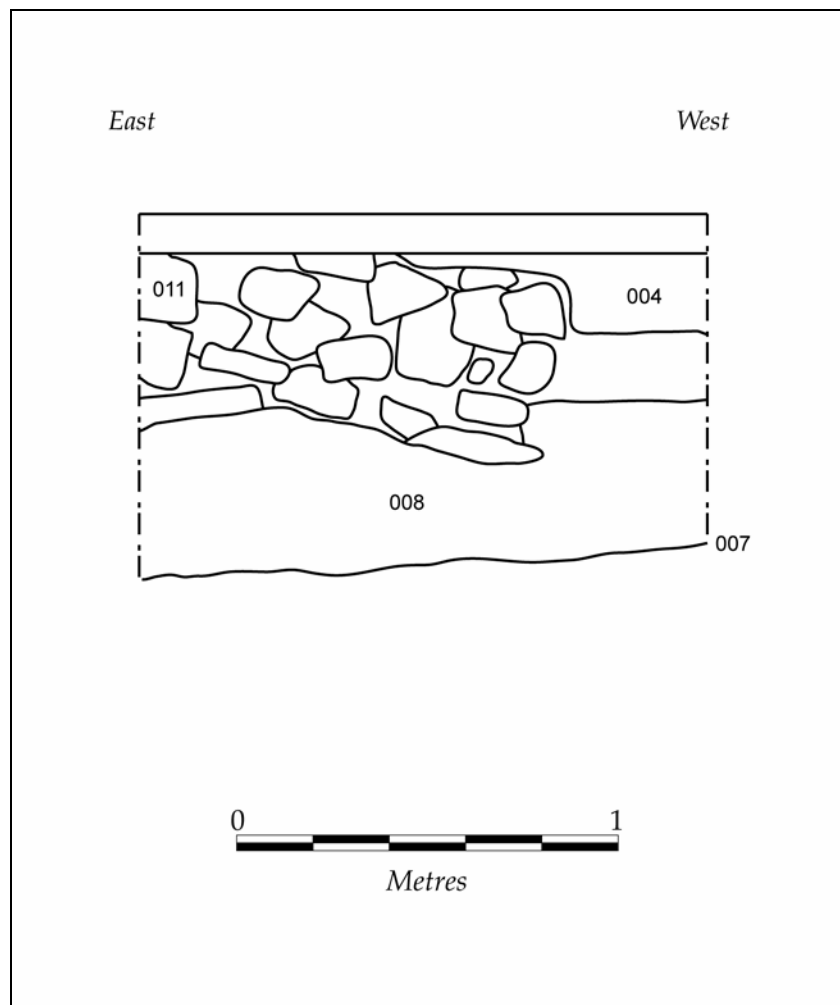


Figure 5 - Drawing 3

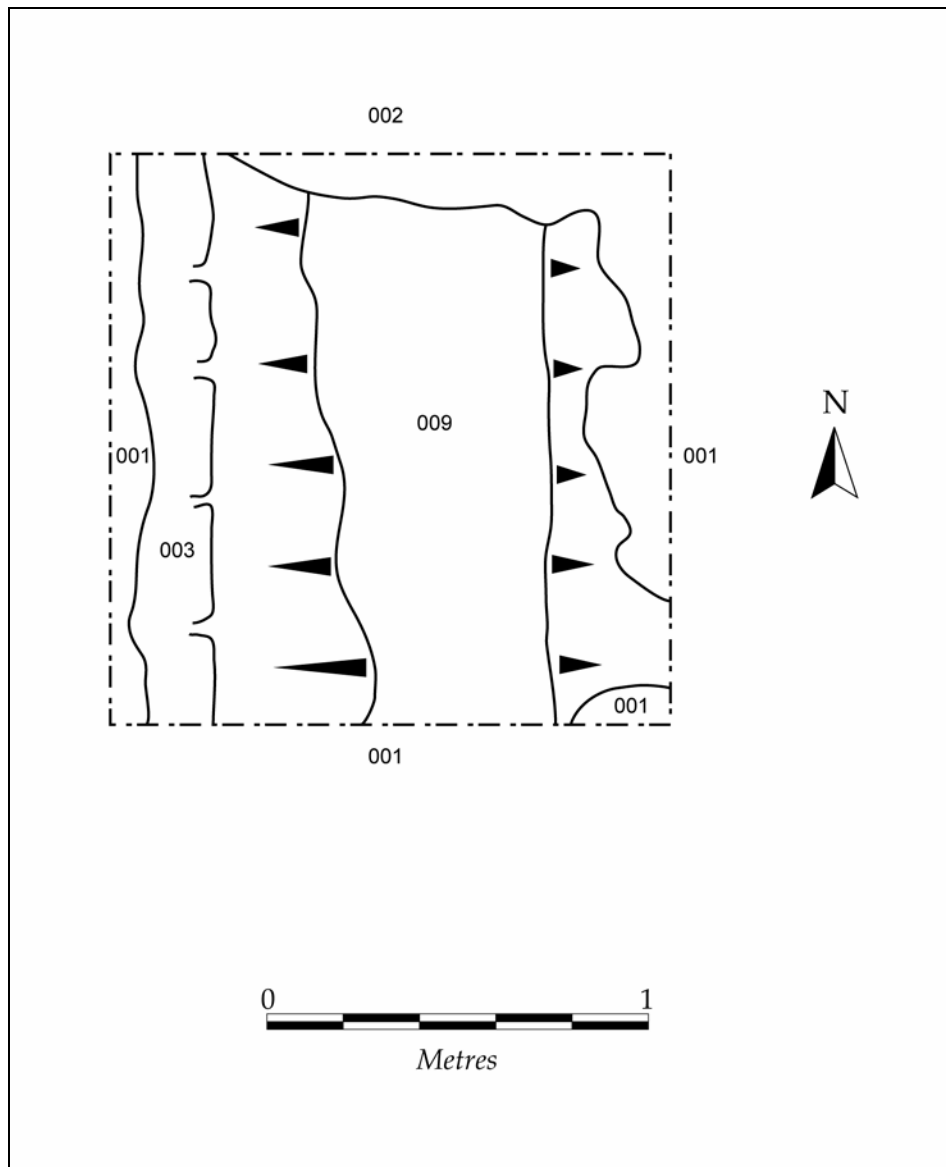


Figure 6 - Drawing 4

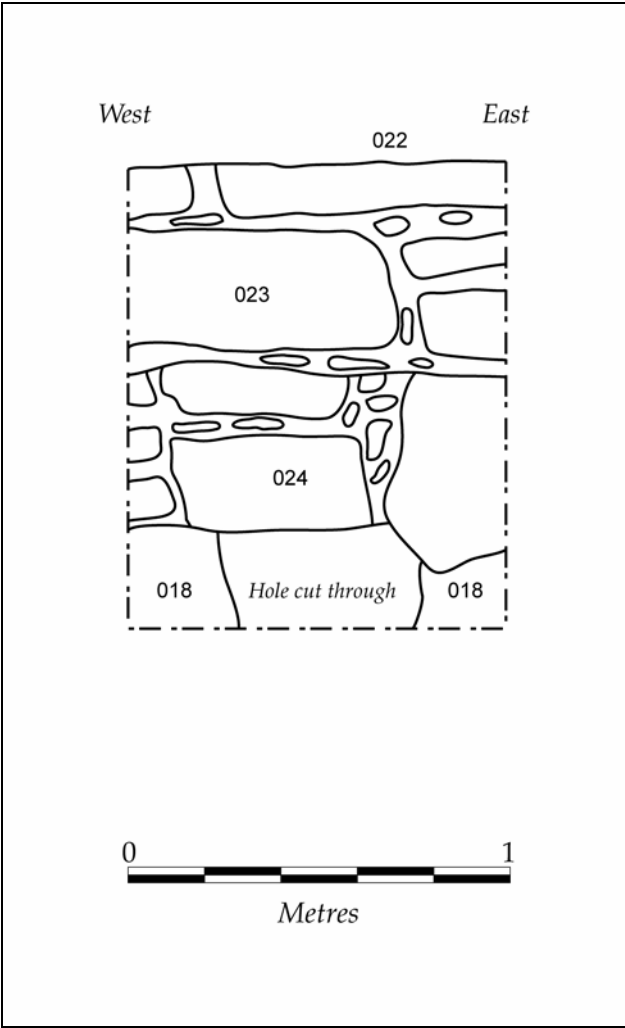


Figure 7 - Drawing 5

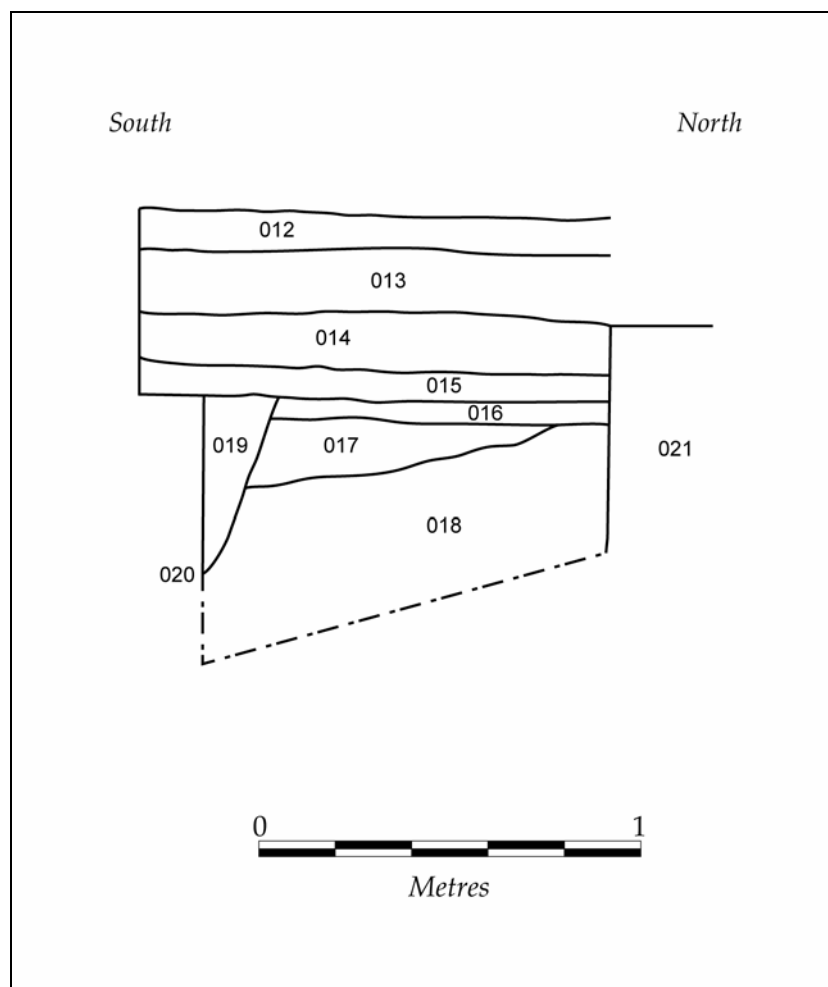


Figure 8 - Drawing 6